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Agenda item 7

Adoption of the report of the Committee on its fifty-sixth session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Alek Yermalovich (Belarus)

Addendum

Proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019

(Item 3 (b) (ii))

Programme 16

Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific

1. At its 16th meeting, on 9 June 2016, the Committee considered programme 16, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific, of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019 (A/71/6 (Prog. 16)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the proposed strategic framework, contained in conference room paper E/AC.51/2016/CRP.1/Rev.1.

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the programme.

Discussion

3. Support was expressed for the work of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in its efforts to expand regional capacity development in preparation for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that regard, clarification was sought on the specific steps taken by ESCAP to reorient its activities and resources in support of the 2030 Agenda.

4. It was emphasized that the regional level was essential for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and support was expressed for ESCAP to play a greater role in promoting regional economic integration and coordinated development.



5. Delegations pointed out that the ESCAP portfolio covered a wide range of issues and had been further supplemented with a new subprogramme on energy, for which several delegations expressed their support and appreciation. It was also noted that the creation of the subprogramme was appropriate and reflective of the mandates contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.
6. With regard to subprogramme 1, Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and financing for development, clarification was sought on the mandated basis for replacement of the term "inclusive development" with "financing for development". In that regard, information was sought on what had been done by ESCAP to foster financing for development.
7. The view was expressed that consensus did not yet exist on what efforts to undertake in the area of paperless trade systems and arrangements, as referenced in paragraph 16.19 (b) of the strategy under subprogramme 2, Trade, investment and innovation. It was requested that ESCAP focus its work on other areas of its mandate.
8. Also with regard to subprogramme 2, clarification was sought as to how "covering the aspects of enhanced representation and voice of developing countries" in paragraph 16.17 of the strategy could lead to the achievement of results. With regard to the reference to the "effective transfer of technology" in paragraph 16.18, a delegation pointed out that the term should be qualified with the phrase "on mutually agreed terms". Further, regarding paragraph 16.19 (b) and the reference to "with a particular focus on paperless trade systems and arrangements", a delegation noted that there was no mandate for such actions.
9. With regard to subprogramme 3, Transport, information was sought on what specific challenges existed in terms of strengthening mobility and transport connectivity and what steps the Commission was taking to address those challenges.
10. With regard to subprogramme 7, Statistics, the view was expressed that the formulation of expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement was methodologically incorrect from a results-based budgeting standpoint.
11. A delegation requested clarification of and questioned whether alternatives existed for several terms, namely: "better understanding of the associated trade-offs involved" in paragraph 16.13 of the strategy under subprogramme 1, Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and financing for development; "[countries] in special situations" in paragraph 16.41 of the strategy under subprogramme 6, Social development; "bilateral organizations" in paragraph 16.45 of the strategy under subprogramme 7, Statistics; and "appropriate fuel mix" in paragraph 16.57 of the strategy under subprogramme 9, Energy.
12. The view was expressed that, despite the overall scope of issues covered by the activities of ESCAP and the region's large size, the proposed document could have been more concise. It was pointed out that duplicative wording could have been avoided in references to collaboration with other United Nations entities under several subprogramme strategy sections, as well as in the five identical subregional components mentioned under subprogramme 8, Subregional activities for development.

13. Clarification was requested with regard to the interpretation of the indicators of achievement for subprogramme 9, Energy, showing an "increased" number of activities. A delegation expressed the view that, as the subprogramme was newly established, it was unclear what the baseline used in conducting a trend analysis would be.

Conclusions and recommendations

14. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to ensure that, in order to achieve its objective of assisting member States in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals, the programme is realigned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in line with established procedures.

15. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 16, Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific, of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019, subject to the following modifications:

Subprogramme 2

Trade, investment and innovation

Paragraph 16.18

At the end of the first sentence, add "on mutually agreed terms and conditions".

Paragraph 16.19 (b)

Replace subparagraph (b) with "Designing and implementing trade facilitation policies and measures, including paperless trade systems;".

Paragraph 16.19 (c)

After "technology transfer", add "on mutually agreed terms and conditions".